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TELEVISION IN THE SOVIET ORBIT

Information on the status of television behind the Iron Curtain is limited. It is clear, however, that the development of the medium is being pursued and that the rate of growth, both in the establishment of transmitters and in the production of receivers, warrant the conclusion that they are progressing at about the same rate as Western Europe.

For example:

1955 - There were 31 Soviet orbit television stations in operation.

1956 - It is estimated there will be 46 stations operating.

1957 - It is estimated there will be 57 stations operating.

In July 1955 it was estimated there were 708,000 television receivers in use in the Soviet orbit. The estimate for December 1955 is 1,060,700 indicating a growth of about 10% per month equalling the growth of Western Europe. The estimated receivers in operation in USSR is one million and for the European satellites 60,700.

Four of the existing stations (Leningrad, Tallin, East Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden and Sofia) and the station planned for Bratislava can be received in European countries. The following is a brief summary of the situation in each country.

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Bulgaria

An experimental station recently went on the air in Sofia. There are an estimated 100 sets in the country, but plans call for local manufacture of receivers (with tubes imported from the USSR). Sofia's telecasts could be heard in portions of Yugoslavia.

Czechoslovakia

One station operates in Prague, three others are under construction and proposed in other cities. There are about 17,000 sets in the country. -----
The Prague station began experimental operation in 1953, regular operation in June 1954. Presently programs are telecast five days a week. The proposed Bratislava station avowedly will attempt to reach audiences in Austria.

Estonia

The transmitter in Tallin, thirty-five miles from Helsinki is obviously designed to reach Finnish audiences.

Germany (East)

Six stations, including one in East Berlin, now serve an estimated 40,000 receivers. Eight stations are being constructed in the Erz mountains, and
two more are proposed in other cities.

The stations operate in a network chain, with the program center in Berlin and the transmitters linked by microwave relay. Programs are telecast 42 hours a week. It has been reported that the Berlin transmitter

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will be increased in power. East Berlin is a logical point from which to telecast to West Germans, presuming difficulties of receiver standards can be overcome.

Hungary

An experimental station in Budapest has been in operation since January 1954. The government has announced that it intends to establish a national network linking the capital with provincial cities. Estimated sets in use 200.

An interesting but unconfirmed report from Vienna states that Hungary is currently constructing a microwave network for TV and FM and has requested Austria to establish a microwave link between the two countries to permit Hungary's connection with Eurovision.

Poland

An experimental station operates in Warsaw, with stations proposed in Krakow, Lodz and Stalinograd. Information on the number of sets is inconclusive, although it has been reported that 500 Soviet sets were imported in 1955, and that mass production of locally manufactured receivers is to begin in 1956. A transmitter if erected in Kolobrzeg might reach parts of Sweden.

Rumania

One experimental station in Bucharest services about 100 receivers. No definite plans for the future have been announced.

USSR

Within the borders of the USSR there are 11 master stations, -----
4 stations under construction and 8 more proposed. There are an estimated
1,000,000 receivers, some of them manufactured in East Germany. -----

The Soviet apparently plans the location of stations to facilitate their being
linked in networks. Their announced locations are near the Western Soviet
border. Stations in Riga, Leningrad and Tallin are capable of reaching
Finland. The first step in the network has been the completion of a radio
relay link between Moscow and Leningrad.

Moscow broadcasts take place every evening except Thursday. Programs
on film are exchanged between stations. The television stations have
conducted large screen projection on theater screens, color transmission,
and have experimented with closed-circuit operation.

It has been announced by the government that set manufacture in 1955
is expected to reach 760,000--more receivers than existed in 1954.
The present trend is away from small screens and envisages production
of 17 and 21 inch screen sets.